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Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4050

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 GENEVA 9724

NODIS

FOR AMB SCHAUFELE FROM WISNER

DEPT PASS LONDON FOR SEITZ

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR RH UK
SUBJ: RHODESIA CONFERENCE: MEETING WITH PARTRIDGE DEC 7

1. AT HIS REQUEST, I CALLED ON MARK PARTRIDGE THIS MORNING. PARTRIDGE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY CHARLES WADDINGTON, THE RHODESIAN SOLICITOR GENERAL.

2. PARTRIDGE TOLD ME THAT SMITH WILL ARRIVE IN GENEVA TOMORROW DEC 8. HE ASKED THAT I NOT PASS THIS INFORMATION TO THE BRITISH.

3. PARTRIDGE RAISED THE QUESTION OF THE RHODESIAN DELEGATION PAPER (GENEVA 9709) AND SAID THAT GIVEN THEIR COMMETMENT NOT TO DISCUSS ANNEX C IN ANY FORM WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATION WITH US, HE ASKED IF I HAD ANY DIFFICULTY WITH THE DOCUMENT. I TOLD PARTRIDGE I COULD NOT OBTAIN A REACTION UNLESS HE WAS PREPARED TO GIVE ME THE DOCUMENT. HE SAID HE WOULD CHECK WITH THE PRIME MINISTER WHO HAD ASKED THAT IT BE HELD UNTIL HE ARRIVED IN GENEVA. PARTRIDGE POINTED OUT THAT THE RHODESIANS DID NOT EXPECT US TO SUPPORT THE CONTENTS OF THE PAPER; SIMPLY, THEY WISHED TO BE ASSURED THAT WE WOULD NOT BE EMBARRASSED BY THEIR TABLING IT.

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4. I ASKED PARTRIDGE HOW HE THOUGHT SMITH WOULD USE SUCH

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A DOCUMENT. PARTRIDGE REPLIED THERE WERE TWO OPTIONS. FIRST, THE RHODESIANS COULD RESTATE FLATLY THE FIVE POINTS AND ASK IF THE DELEGATIONS IN PLENARY WERE PREPARED TO USE THESE POINTS AS A BASIS OF A DETTLEMENT. HE ANTICI-PATED AN EXPLOSION BUT AT LEAST THIS WOULD CLEAR THE AIR AND THE RHODESIANS WOULD BE ABLE TO SAY THEY HAD TRIED TO LIVE BY THEIR "CONTRACT." ALTERNATELY, THEY COULD TABLE THEIR REWRITING OF THE FIVE POINTS AND ANNEX C AND SHOW THEREBY THEY WERE PARTICIPATING IN THE NEGOTIATIONS IN GOOD FAITH. PARTRIDGE AND WADDINGTON ARE INCLINED TO ARGUE FOR THE SECOND OPTION WHEN THEY MEET SMITH BUT RECOGNIZED THAT THEIR DOCUMENT IS NOT LIKELY TO BE RECEIVED FAVORABLY. THEY TOLD ME THAT DECISION ON TACTICS WOULD BE MADE BY SMITH AND HE HAD GIVEN NO INDICATION HOW HE WISHED TO PROCEED.

5. I ASKED PARTRIDGE IF THE RHODESIANS HAD THOUGHT FURTHER ABOUT A BRITISH PRESENCE. PARTRIDGE REPLIED THE RHODESIAN POSITION HAD NOT CHANGED AND THEY AGREE WITH MUGABE, NKOMO AND SITHOLE THAT A BRITISH PRESENCE SHOULD BE NO MORE THAN SYMBOLIC AND NO MORE THAT WOULD PERMIT BRITAIN TO DISCHARGE ITS FORMAL DECOLONIZATION RESPONSIBILITIES. IF MUGABE THOUGHT THAT SENIOR BRITISH OFFICERS COULD REPLACE RHODESIANS, THE RHODESIAN GOVERNMENT HAD NO SUCH THOUGHT IN MIND.

6. SUMMING UP HIS OWN VIEWS ON THE STATE OF THE CON-FERENCE, PARTRIDGE SAID THAT HE WAS MOST PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE OUTCOME. THE BEHAVIOR OF MUGABE HAD CONVINCED HIM THAT IF MUGABE AND HIS BAND JOIN AN INTERIM GOVERN-MENT, THEY WILL DRIVE TO SET UP A MARXIST STATE. "THERE WILL BE NO FUTURE FOR EUROPEANS OR THE WEST IN RHODESIA." ELECTIONS WOULD NOT TAKE PLACE, MODERATES LIKE MUZOREWA WOULD GRADUALLY DISAPPEAR AND THE BRITISH WOULD "SLIDE OUT OF THE PICTURE" LIKE THE PORTUGUESE IN MOZAMBIQUE AND ANGOLA.

7. PARTRIDGE CONTINUED, HARSHLY CRITICIZING BRITISH CONDUCT OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. THE FUNDAMENTAL FLAW IN THE BRITISH STRATEGY, PARTRIDGE CLAIMED, WAS THAT THE
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BRITISH HAD TRIED TO OBTAIN A CONSENSUS ON EVERY ISSUE FROM ALL DELEGATIONS PRESENT. IN SO DOING, THE BRITISH HAD MADE FUNDAMENTAL POLITICAL AND TACTICAL MISTAKES. FIRST, THEY OVERLOOKED THE FACT THAT RHODESIA IS A SOVEREIGN NATION. EVEN IF IT IS CHARACTERIZED AS ILLEGAL, RHODESIA HAS STANDING AND THE GOVERNMENT IN SALISBURY HAS EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF THE COUNTRY. SECOND, IN VIEW OF THAT FACT, THERE WAS NO LEGAL BASIS FOR

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BRITAIN NEGOTIATING WITH THE NATIONALISTS NOR WAS IT
POLITICALLY REALISTIC TO ASSUME THAT EXTREMISTS LIKE
MUGABE COULD BE BROUGHT INTO A REASONABLE SETTLEMENT.
THIRD, WHATEVER CONSENSUS THE BRITISH WERE TRYING TO
REACH IN GENEVA FAILED TO RECOGNIZE THE FACT THAT ALL
RHODESIANS WERE NOT PROPERLY REPRESENTED HERE. NEITHER THE
CHIEFS, THE TRIBES, NOR MODERATE BLACK RHODESIAN
OPINION WAS BEING ASKED TO PASS JUDGMENT ON A CON-
SENSUS. FOURTH, ACHIEVING A CONSENSUS IN THE LONG
RUN MAKES NO SENSE. IF ELECTIONS ARE TO BE HELD, ONE
PARTY WILL WIN AND THE OTHERS WILL LOSE. NO MATTER HOW
MANY PARTIES PARTICIPATE IN DEVELOPING THE CONSENSUS IN
THE OUTSET, IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS THE PARTY WHICH CARRIES
THE ELECTION WILL HAVE A MAJOR VOICE IN DECIDING THE
FUTURE.

8. IF GENEVA FAILS, PARTRIDGE CONTINUED, IT WAS HIS
PERSONAL JUDGMENT THAT SMITH COULD SEEK TO STRIKE A
PRIVATE BARGAIN WITH MUZOREWA. WADDINGTON ADMITTED THAT
HE HAD HAD EXTENSIVE BUT QUIET DEALINGS WITH THE
MUZOREWA DELEGATION IN THE PAST 10 DAYS. WHILE HE WAS
ONLY EXPRESSING A PERSONAL POINT OF VIEW, PARTRIDGE
SAID THAT ELECTIONS COULD BE CALLED AND MUZOREWA WOULD
HAVE THE BEST CHANCE TO WIN THOSE ELECTIONS. AN
INTERIM GOVERNMENT WITH A COUNCIL OF STATE WOULD BE SET
UP AND A CONSTITUTION NEGOTIATED. FROM THE RHODESIAN
POINT OF VIEW, THERE ARE MANY PROBLEMS WITH THIS
SOLUTION. MUZOREWA'S PEOPLE HAVE INDICATED TO THE
RHODESIANS THAT THEY WOULD REQUIRE AN EARLY REPEAL
OF ALL DISCRIMINATORY LAWS, PARTICULARLY LAND AND
HOUSE OWNERSHIP DISCRIMINATION. PARTRIDGE AGREED
A REPEAL OF SUCH LAWS IS NECESSARY; THEIR REPEAL CANNOT
BE EXECUTED QUICKLY. RHODESIANS HAD DIFFICULTIES WITH
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MUZOREWA'S FORMULA FOR SELECTING THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT
PRIME MINISTER ON THE BASIS OF UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE.
IF THEY AGREED WITH MUZOREWA, THEY WOULD CONCEDE IN
ADVANCE A POINT THAT THEY WISH TO RESERVE FOR
CONSTITUTIONAL DISCUSSIONS. IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN
PART OF RHODESIAN THINKING, PARTRIDGE REMINDED ME,
THAT THERE BE A QUALIFIED FRANCHISE. PARTRIDGE ADMITTED
THAT MUZOREWA WAS NERVOUS ABOUT ENTERING INTO AN
AGREEMENT WITH THE SMITH GOVERNMENT. HE IS NOT
UNINTERESTED, BUT GIVEN THE FACT THAT HE DOES NOT COMMAND
ANY GUERRILLA SUPPORT, HE WOULD NEED SOME ASSURANCE FROM
THE US AND GREAT BRITAIN THAT WE WOULD SUPPORT HIM.
MOREOVER, MEMBERS OF MUZOREWA'S DELEGATION HAD TOLD
WADDINGTON THEY WERE CONCERNED THAT A COUNCIL OF STATE
WOULD GIVE EUROPEANS A VETO OVER THE CONSTITUTION MIGHT

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RESULT IN THE SITUATION IN WHICH NO CONSTITUTION WAS DEVELOPED BY THE TIME INDEPENDENCE CAME DUE. MUZOREWA WOULD THEN BE CAUGHT HOLDING THE BAG AND HIS POLITICAL SUPPORT WOULD SUFFER.

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 GENEVA 9724

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FOR AMB SCHAUFELE FROM WISNER

DEPT PASS LONDON FOR SEITZ

9. WADDINGTON SAID THERE MIGHT BE A WAY TO SOLVE THIS CONCERN. IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO AGREE THAT IN THE EVENT OF A DEADLOCK OVER THE CONSTITUTION, THE BRITISH WOULD TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR DRAFTING A CONSTITUTION WHICH THE RHODESIAN PARTIES WOULD THEN ACCEPT. THE DIFFICULTY, WADDINGTON POINTED OUT, IS THAT WHITE RHODESIANS DO NOT TRUST THE BRITISH TO WRITE A FAIR CONSTITUTION. HE ASSURED ME THAT HIS NOTION WAS PURELY PERSONAL AND HAD NOT BEEN DISCUSSED WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT OR WITH SMITH.

10. I TOLD PARTRIDGE AND WADDINGTON THAT I COULD SEE MANY REASONS FOR MUZOREWA NOT GOING ALONG WITH A BILATERAL BARGAIN AND GAVE THEM NO ENCOURAGEMENT THAT WE FOUND THE IDEA APPEALING. I ACCEPTED THEIR DESCRIPTION OF A MUZOREWA SETTLEMENT AS AN INFORMAL DESCRIPTION OF WHAT THEY HAD IN MIND AND NOTHING MORE.

11. COMMENT: PARTRIDGE AND WADDINGTON'S DISCUSSION OF CONVERSATIONS WITH MUZOREWA ARE THE FIRST CONFIRMATION WE HAVE HAD THAT PRIVATE TALKS ARE GOING ON. MUZOREWA'S

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RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE CONSTITUTUION AND WHITE ABILITY
TO BLOCK AN ACCEPTABLE CONSTITUTION ARE EXACTLY THE
SAME AS NKOMO'S (GENEVA 9664). A DEADLOCK OVER THE
CONSTITUTION IS ONE OF THE REASONS THE NATIONALISTS
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ARE OPPOSED TO THE COUNCIL OF SAUWADDINGTON'S
SUGGESTION THAT THE BRITISH COULD BE USED TO BREAK THE
DEADLOCK IS INTRIGUING A AY PROVIDE AN ADDITIONAL
ELEMENT IN A PACKAGE OF BRITISH RESPPONSIBILITIES.
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